

## CALL FOR ACTION: SPEED UP SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY BY FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

According to the European Commission's Communication 'Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation'<sup>1</sup>, travel and tourism is one of the most affected ecosystems by the COVID-19 pandemic and requires € 161 billion<sup>2</sup> worth of investment to bounce back to pre-crisis levels. The new Recovery and Resilience Facility<sup>3</sup>, proposed by the Commission to help the EU rebuild after the pandemic, offers an unprecedented opportunity to support tourism and ensure that the sector helps to drive digital and green transitions, and thereby strengthens both economic and social resilience.

The aim of the Recovery and Resilience Facility is to provide large-scale financial support for reforms and investments undertaken by Member States, to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic, making the EU's economies more sustainable and resilient. In order to benefit from this unprecedented funding opportunity, Member States must submit to the Commission as from 15 October 2020 (until April 2021) their draft recovery and resilience plans outlining national investment and reform agendas in line with the twin strategic objectives: digitalisation and sustainability.

### Why invest in tourism?

**MULTIPLIER EFFECT: Tourism is transversal and its extensive value chain touches upon multiple sub-sectors.**

- Travel and Tourism is a healthy and growing sector that has been expanding in the last 30 years. Europe is the number one tourism destination worldwide, holding half of the global market share of international tourism.<sup>4</sup>
- The sector accounts for more than 9.5% of the EU's GDP, provides jobs to 22.6 million people and has direct impact on transport, retail, agro-food industry, and the wider economy<sup>5</sup>.
- 1 EUR of value generated by tourism results in additional 56 cent of added value in indirect effect on other industries.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the European Commission 'Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation', 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-europe-moment-repair-prepare-next-generation.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Commission Staff Working Document 'Identifying Europe's recovery needs', accompanying the document Communication from the European Commission 'Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation', 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/assessment\\_of\\_economic\\_and\\_investment\\_needs.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/assessment_of_economic_and_investment_needs.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Commission presents next steps for €672.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility in 2021 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 - [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_1659](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1659)

<sup>4</sup> UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer, August/September 2020 - <https://www.unwto.org/news/international-tourist-numbers-down-65-in-first-half-of-2020-unwto-reports>

<sup>5</sup> WTTC, EU 2020 ANNUAL RESEARCH: KEY HIGHLIGHTS (2019 data) - <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>

<sup>6</sup> Communication from the European Commission 'Tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond', 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-commission-tourism-transport-2020-and-beyond\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-commission-tourism-transport-2020-and-beyond_en.pdf)

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC GOALS: A healthy travel and tourism ecosystem can help achieve all four general objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility:

- **Promote the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion:** with appropriate support, tourism can be one of the most effective engines to deliver sustainable development we have, as it supports employment across all areas and demographics.
- **Strengthen the Union's resilience:** Tourism is micro/SME dominated. Europe's distinctiveness and appeal as a destination depends on this.
- **Mitigate impact of the crisis:** Smaller businesses always return employment to the economy faster than larger corporations. In the travel and tourism sector access to short-term funding means long-term job generation.
- **Support green and digital transitions:** Tourism adds to wellbeing and generates revenue which is needed to preserve community identity, culture, and heritage.

*Question to Manifesto supporting organisations - Could we suggest WHY a more digital tourism will also be greener?*

Digital tourism = 'greener' ?

- Planning:
  - Useful data could be collected in order to have a better understanding of tourist movement patterns and avoid unnecessary emissions by optimizing the visitor guidance.
  - Collect information on uses in sensitive areas and planning public use combining tourism and conservation, and providing public information to attract green tourists to hidden gems destinations and raise awareness about the preservation of ecosystems.
- Product development,
  - use of new technologies to enclose the green/blue surroundings of heritage cities to the heart of a visit
  - in these uncertain times = local discoveries = the only thing you are maybe allowed to do.
  - Green/nature = gives you a way to escape and refill your energy
- Promotion:
  - tap into digital promotional channels to motivate people to come / keep on dreaming / escape from your home and thoughts
- Possible evolution and digital approach for tourism as an asset to overcome crisis's as these
  - Stay top of mind at your public during crisis's
  - Rethink the way to visit a place
  - Meeting places: be more resilient by offering digital meetings and conferences (see Mechelen example)
  - Overall: resilience! Both for leisure and business tourism.

RISK AND OPPORTUNITY: Tourism must be firmly incorporated in the recovery and resilience plans. If it's not in the plan, it's not in the budget.

- It is essential that impact on the travel and tourism ecosystem is an evaluation criterion for all major components of Recovery and Resilience plans: the multiplier effect of smart investment that also benefits tourism is highly significant.
- The COVID-19 crisis represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fund the reset of one of Europe's most distinctive and successful sectors, and one of our best exports.
- Without that re-set, rate and risk of return of tourism's negative impacts is increased. According to UNWTO<sup>7</sup>, Europe saw a 66% decline in tourist arrivals in the first half of 2020

<sup>7</sup> UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer, August/September 2020 - <https://www.unwto.org/news/international-tourist-numbers-down-65-in-first-half-of-2020-unwto-reports>

and WTTC estimates<sup>8</sup> that the region risks losing 29.5 million of travel and tourism jobs (80% of 2019) and losing 1,442 billion EUR in travel and tourism GDP (80% of 2019) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## How does it work in practice?

The European Commission provides some **Guidance to Member States on Recovery and Resilience Plans**<sup>9</sup>. Below is a list of investments required in travel and tourism to harness the potential of the sector to generate jobs and growth and support green and digital transitions. These are grouped according to the EU flagship initiatives listed in the European Commission's Guidance.

**THIS NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED BY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS (Manifesto supporting organisations).** Some initial ideas are provided for inspiration. Please fill-in with concrete projects from your area of expertise.

Please list your **concrete** funding proposals as actions under each category. Be clear and concise – maximum 100 words per action. Please **do not** create new categories. You can of course include more than one proposal under each category.

*Example:*

*Category 3. Recharge and Refuel*

*Action: Fund research in and development of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation and cruises.*

### 1. Power up

– The acceleration of the development and use of renewables – Sustainable Tourism Resource Management

- The acceleration of the development and use of **the bike for cycling tourism, for active and clean energy travel, and for transition to a greener tourism**; including the deployment of new non-motorised infrastructures and the upgrade of the existing ones, and the installation of self-sufficient charging stations for e-bikes along the greenways & cycle routes.

- Acceleration of the development and use of renewables nearby tourism thematic routes, cultural and/or nature, in service providers and in leisure facilities and attractions; including **installation of self-sufficient charging stations for e-bikes along non motorised routes** (greenways & cycle routes).

### 2. Renovate

– The improvement of energy efficiency of public and private buildings – Greener Tourism Infrastructure - Water management - Waste disposal - Sustainable mobility

- **The improvement of greener tourism infrastructure for sustainable and active travel** by enhancing and creating new non-motorized routes, re-using as much as possible abandoned transport infrastructure, mainly disused railways for cycling & walking. These safe and accessible for all kind of users infrastructures are also a direct benefit for job creation and local people, that highly use and support these infrastructures.

- **The improvement of the connection infrastructure** between the non-motorized routes (as greenways and cycle routes) with the main attractions nearby (natural as e.g. N2000 and cultural assets as UNESCO sites and other heritage assets), small villages and areas around. Furthermore with the public transport to facilitate the **intermodality**, removing obstacles to favor that more tourists and local people use the cycle routes, their services and attractions around.

These improvements of green tourism infrastructure will facilitate a greener tourism transition and will put in value the cultural and natural assets of rural areas around greenways, improving local economy, helping the recovery of SMEs and creating the conditions for new SME's and service providers in the territories, and therefore local job creation.

### 3. Recharge and Refuel

<sup>8</sup> <https://wtcc.org/News-Article/More-than-197m-Travel-Tourism-jobs-will-be-lost-due-to-prolonged-travel-restrictions>

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/recovery-and-resilience-task-force\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/recovery-and-resilience-task-force_en)

– The promotion of future-proof clean technologies to accelerate the use of sustainable, accessible, and smart transport, charging and refuelling stations and extension of public transport, development of sustainable alternative fuels for aviation and cruises, etc. – Tourism in Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

- Improving the connection between the greener tourism infrastructure for sustainable and active travel (greenways & cycleroutes) with public transport; facilitating intermodality by building new sections to ensure a safe connection with public transport and to specially facilitate combined travels (bicycle+train / boat /buses); promoting cycle friendly public transport nodes (airports, railways stations, harbors, bus). Including installation of self-sufficient charging stations for e-bikes.

#### 4. Connect

– The fast rollout of rapid broadband services to all regions and households, including fiber and 5G networks – Connectivity drives tourism

- The fast rollout of rapid broadband services to rural and mountain areas, especially in the surroundings of non motorised, cultural and natural thematic routes (as greenways), to enable the digitisation of SMEs and the tourism ecosystem of the thematic routes.

#### 5. Modernise

– The digitalisation of public administration and services, including judicial and healthcare systems – Digitalisation of Tourism SMEs. - Product Development and Diversification – to spread the benefit of tourism, and reduce risk of harmful impact, investment is required in product development and related initiatives from best practice tool-kits and public-private collaboration to capability in customisation and promotion – Inter-modal connectivity – Seamless travel solutions (airport testing capacity, biometrics)

- The digitalisation of public administration and services, specifically on tourism ecosystem around thematic routes related to natural and cultural heritage: Digitalisation of Tourism SMEs., Product Development and Diversification. Investment is required in product development and related initiatives from best practice tool-kits and public-private collaboration to capability in customisation and promotion, marketing and sale.– Inter-modal connectivity; Seamless travel solutions until final destination (including rural areas, with lack of public transport).

#### 6. Scale-up

– The increase in European industrial data cloud capacities and the development of the most powerful, cutting edge, and sustainable processors – Smart Tourism Data

- Installation of cutting edge counters along greenways and cycleroutes for data gathering on cycling & walking users, to gain detailed information about the user behavior - frequency peak hours, preferred areas, to help for planning and for measuring the impact of the investments. Permitting sharing data and benchmarking, counters are a strategic tool for the elaboration of tourism promotion plans.

#### 7. Reskill and upskill

– The adaptation of education systems to support digital skills and educational and vocational training for all ages – Tourism Quality Programmes

- **The adaptation of the educational and vocational training for all ages, supporting the transition towards greener holidays and adapted to the new products of emerging tourism (cycling, nature, outdoor, heritage, ...).** Practical training, including support to the real digitalisation of SMEs for a better digital management of the business, the customization of the offer of services and the promotion of tourism products; supported by mentoring for SMEs and micro-enterprises in the tourism sector and the exchange of good practices to favour **collaboration** (local, regional, national and **transnational**).

### Where to find examples?

THIS NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED BY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS (Manifesto supporting organisations).  
*Please add examples from already announced national recovery plans.*

The first National recovery plans are targeting the needs of tourism to recover in a more sustainable, competitive and resilient way following both targeted specifically and as beneficiary of the range of investments that those strategies will support employment, infrastructure, and economy reforms (e.g. France Relance<sup>10</sup>).

Recovery plans:

- City-wide: [https://www.mechelen.be/mechelen-na-corona\\_lokaal-herstelplan](https://www.mechelen.be/mechelen-na-corona_lokaal-herstelplan)
- Visit & Meet in Mechelen, enclosed

Both in Dutch – for the city-wide strategy: need more time to explore the city-wide recovery plan & links to tourism

- Flemish Government recovery plan (September 2020) including tourism as strategic element: please see yellow marked words in this document. Enclosed

Wallonie:

- there is a tourism recovery plan for Wallonia: <https://relance.tourismewallonie.be/>
- Also as part of the recovery, a budget of €5 million has been allocated to grant €80 PASS to 60,000 households to be spent on attractions and accommodation in Wallonia during the low season (October, November, December). This money will be paid directly to tourist service providers. More info here: <https://walloniebelgiquetourisme.be/fr-be/119/pass-visit-wallonia>

Spain:

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/presidente/actividades/Documents/2020/07102020\\_PlanRecuperacion.pdf](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/presidente/actividades/Documents/2020/07102020_PlanRecuperacion.pdf) (reference to tourism)

Italy: <http://www.politicheeuropee.gov.it/media/5378/linee-guida-pnrr-2020.pdf> (reference to tourism)

Portugal:

<https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=plano-de-recuperacao-e-resiliencia-recuperar-portugal-2021-2026-plano-preliminar-> (no reference to tourism)

Denmark: Before summer the Danish Parliament gave nearly 100 m EUR to save and boost the tourism sector in Denmark. It included among other things free domestic ferry transportation for pedestrians and cyclists, cheap domestic railway passes and a 2,5 m EUR investment in cycling tourism (=development of a junction network in Denmark).

Prepared by the European Greenways Association, EGWA, including members' contribution

*Please let me know if you have any question/comment*

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[www.greenwayseurope.org](http://www.greenwayseurope.org)

[www.greenwaysheritage.org](http://www.greenwaysheritage.org)

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/cfiles/mesures\\_france\\_relance.pdf](https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/cfiles/mesures_france_relance.pdf)